

TAX FACTS

Information for Washington State's Business Community

WASHINGTON
STATE

UBI

UNIFIED
BUSINESS
IDENTIFIER

Fall UBI Business Information Workshops

There's a lot of information available to business owners about state laws and regulations. To get this information, come to one of the free Business Information Workshops in October and November. The departments of Revenue, Licensing, Labor and Industries, and Employment Security jointly sponsor these popular workshops.

Representatives will discuss the laws administered by these agencies that relate to your business activities. In addition, representatives from the Department of Ecology, Business Assistance Center, Department of Social and Health Services' Support Enforcement Division, and Internal Revenue Service will be present.

Free Business Information Workshops in October and November

To register for the workshop nearest you, call the Department of Revenue at 1-800-647-7706 (TTY users please call 1-800-451-7985). Reservations will be taken starting October 1. Traditionally, many people make reservations and do not attend the workshops. Consequently, we do not limit the number signing up

and seating will be on a first-come, first-seated basis. When you register for a workshop, the automated telephone system will provide directions to

the workshop location. Interpreters for sight and hearing impaired persons are available upon request. To arrange for this service, or if you have special facility needs, please call (360) 586-5372 at least two weeks prior to the date of the workshop. ▲

Fall 1999 Workshop Schedule

Date	Location	Address
Oct. 15	Port Angeles	Dept. of Transportation 1707 South "C" St.
Oct. 19	Bellevue	Bellevue Overlake Conference Center Overlake Offsite Annex, Ptarmigan Rm. 121 107th Ave. N.E.
Oct. 22	Longview	Lower Columbia College New Student Center 1600 Maple
Oct. 26	Bellingham	Bellingham Technical College Bldg. "G" 3028 Lindberg
Oct. 28	Aberdeen	Dept. of Social and Health Services 415 W. Wishkaw
Nov. 2	Walla Walla	Community Center Downtown Barrett Bldg., Suite 214 13 1/2 E. Main
Nov. 4	Yakima	Educational Service District 105 Conference Center 33 S. 2 nd Ave.
Nov. 5	Wenatchee	City of Wenatchee 129 S. Chelan
Nov. 9	Seattle	Best Western Airport Executel 20717 International Blvd.

Agenda

7:30-8:00	Check In
8:00-8:05	Introduction
8:05-8:55	Dept. of Licensing
9:00-9:30	Dept. of Social and Health Services/ Div. of Child Support
9:30-9:40	BREAK
9:40-11:00	Dept. of Labor and Industries
11:00-11:10	BREAK
11:10-12:30	Employment Security Dept.
12:30-1:30	LUNCH
1:30-2:15	Internal Revenue Service
2:20-3:45	Dept. of Revenue
3:50-4:00	Closing Comments

Property tax reminder!

Don't forget! October 31, 1999, is the due date for second-half payments for 1999 real and personal property tax. If you have any questions about the payment of property taxes, please contact your county treasurer's office. Look for the telephone number in the county government section of the telephone directory.



Rule changes



The Department of Revenue is responsible for administering most of the tax laws enacted by the Washington State Legislature. As a part of this responsibility, the Department publishes rules to assist taxpayers in accurately reporting their tax liability. To reflect changes in tax law and industry practices, these rules, Washington Administrative Code (WAC), often require revising through the rule-making procedure.

The following administrative rules have been adopted or repealed since the June 1999 issue of *Tax Facts*:

Adoption

WAC 458-16-320 (Fast Fax code 4320)	Emergency or transitional housing. (Property tax rule.) <i>Effective July 5, 1999.</i>
WAC 458-20-165 (Fast Fax code 2165)	Laundries, dry cleaners, self-service laundries and dry cleaners. (Excise tax rule.) <i>Effective July 10, 1999.</i>
WAC 458-20-195 (Fast Fax code 2195)	Taxes, deductibility. (Excise tax rule.) <i>Effective July 10, 1999.</i>
WAC 458-20-207 (Fast Fax code 2207)	Legal, arbitration, and mediation services. (Excise tax rule.) <i>Effective July 15, 1999.</i>
WAC 458-40-660 (Fast Fax code 3660)	Timber excise tax - Stumpage value tables - Stumpage value adjustments. (Timber tax rule.) <i>Effective July 1, 1999.</i>
WAC 458-61-090 (Fast Fax code 6090)	Date of sale - Interest and penalty. (Real estate excise tax rule.) <i>Effective July 31, 1999.</i>

Repeal

WAC 458-65-010	Time limitations. (Unclaimed property tax rule.) <i>Effective July 31, 1999.</i>
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Newly adopted rules are available on the Department's Internet site at <http://dor.wa.gov>. Use the "Rules/Laws" hot button to access the rules. You may also use the Department's automated telephone system to ask that a copy be faxed or mailed to you. For information about the automated system, including *Fast Fax*, see page four. ▲

ETA 2002 revised

Excise Tax Advisory (ETA) 2002.16.179, Low Density Light and Power Utility Deduction was revised July 28, 1999. The ETA is revised annually to provide the state average electric power rate for July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000. This rate is used to calculate the allowable deduction for light and power businesses serving areas of low population density.

The Agency issues ETAs to quickly advise businesses of changes in tax applications that occur as a result of court rulings, legislative or business changes. ETAs are available on the Agency's web site at <http://dor.wa.gov> under the "Rules/Laws" hot button. ▲

New tax consultation service

Once again, the Department of Revenue breaks new ground by being the first state tax agency in the nation to offer a tax consultation service. This new program is designed to increase voluntary tax compliance and strengthen relationships with taxpayers.

During the one-on-one tax consultation with a Department tax consultant, you will learn how state taxes apply to your specific business activities. Department tax consultants are auditors or other qualified employees. The consultation may occur at your place of business or the nearest Department of Revenue field office. The visit will take approximately two hours.

After the consultation, you will receive a summary of the topics discussed. Upon request, the consultant will provide written instructions on how to report your taxes. A tax consultation will not result in a tax audit.

If you are interested in a tax consultation, please call the Telephone Information Center at 1-800-647-7706 to request a pre-visit questionnaire. After you complete and return the questionnaire to the Department of Revenue field office nearest you, a tax consultant will contact you to schedule a visit. ▲

E-mail notification of published determinations

The Department posts published determinations on its web site at <http://dor.wa.gov> under the "Rules/Laws" hot button. To receive electronic notification each time the Department posts new determinations, please send your e-mail address to Darcy Bristow at darcy@dor.wa.gov. ▲

Restaurateurs take the lead in electronic filing

Restaurateurs across the state are discovering the ease of filing their state excise taxes with Washington Department of Revenue's new Electronic Filing (ELF) program. The Department found that the restaurant industry ranks first for the number of businesses using ELF to file and pay their taxes over the Internet.

The benefits of using ELF are nothing new to Marc Boyd, owner of The Limelight Café in Seattle's Magnolia area. After opening the casual, neighborhood fine dining restaurant in May 1998, Marc was faced with the familiar task of remembering to mail his taxes by the due date. As busy as Marc gets running the restaurant and managing his own real estate investment company, this often presents quite a challenge. Since Marc started using ELF, filing his taxes has never been easier. "I can file my taxes whenever I have a few extra minutes and know that they'll automatically be paid on the due date," said Marc.

Marc was impressed when he first learned about Revenue's new program that allows businesses to file their taxes over the Internet and "post-date" their payment for the actual due date. "Filing my taxes electronically takes me less than five minutes," commented Marc. The system automatically calculates the amount of tax I owe and checks to make sure I haven't made any mistakes."

Marc believes the simplicity of filing electronically and the hectic schedules of those in the restaurant business are the primary reasons people in this industry are using ELF. "Those of us in the restaurant business are ex-



Marc Boyd, owner of The Limelight Café, recommends electronic filing to others

tremely busy. . . this program lets us file when we have a few extra minutes and frees up time to do other things," said Marc. "I'd recommend it to any business."

To learn more about Electronic Filing (ELF) and to see if you qualify, visit the Department of Revenue's web site at <http://dor.wa.gov> or call toll-free 1-877-FILE-ELF.



Correction

Food fish/shellfish tax rates

In the June 1999 issue of Tax Facts, the tax rates for sea urchins and sea cucumbers were incorrectly stated. The rates as stated did not reflect the current seven percent surtax, authorized by RCW 82.02.030.

Effective January 1, 2000, the correct tax rate for sea urchins and sea cucumbers will be 0.0492 (4.92 percent). On January 1, 2006, the rate will decrease to 0.0255 (2.55 percent). The Quarter 1, 2000, Enhanced Food Fish Excise Tax Return will reflect the new rates. Look for more information with the Enhanced Food Fish Excise Tax Returns for Quarter 4, 1999, and Quarter 1, 2000. ▲

Benefits of Electronic Filing

- ◆ Customizes your tax return to list only the taxes you need to report
- ◆ Automatically calculates the tax due and the Small Business Tax Credit
- ◆ Provides all the information you need — including local tax rates and deduction detail information — at the click of a mouse
- ◆ Offers immediate, on-line access to help screens, tax rules and laws, and regulations
- ◆ Checks for errors
- ◆ Sends payment and data in a secure environment

Revenue assesses year 2000 readiness

Revenue has taken a giant step to ensure its systems are prepared for the year 2000. Fred Kiga, Agency Director, formally signed two certification letters making the Department officially year 2000 (Y2K) certified. Every system being used by the Agency has been tested and certified.

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strategy was developed and documented. Approximately 3,000 programs and processes representing over two million lines of code have been reviewed, and all mission critical programs are now Y2K operational.

To alleviate the impact of the year 2000 date change on vital services, Governor

This accomplishment represents extensive efforts on behalf of the whole Agency. Beginning in early 1997, the Agency responded to Y2K Risk Assessment auditors with documented proof of the Agency's continued progress towards Y2K compliance. This assessment included an examination of Revenue's computer hardware and software, security, facilities, shared resources, and an ongoing evaluation to ensure progress at all levels. Under the strict criteria of the Information Services staff, a Y2K

Locke created a Statewide Information Group to oversee the state's Y2K compliance project. Governor Locke also unveiled a new database, posted on the World Wide Web, to give Washington residents access to Y2K technology information from many of the state's major service providers. To access your personalized Y2K profile, check the State of Washington Year 2000 readiness web site at <http://access.wa.gov/2000>. ▲

24-hour automated services



The Department of Revenue's Telephone Information Center offers several automated services. With the exception of *Tax Express* and Revenue's Internet web site, you can access any of these services by calling 1-800-647-7706. Listen to the menu and select the option you wish to use.

Fast Fax — transmit documents directly to your fax machine. For a list of available documents, enter code 500#. To bypass menu selections, call (360) 786-6116.

Workshops — call to attend one of the spring or fall UBI Business Information Workshops.

Vehicle or vessel fraud — report vehicle or vessel licensing fraud.

Address changes — notify us if you have moved or changed your mailing address.

Business closures — notify us if you have closed or sold all or part of your business. If you've sold your business, tell us who you sold the business to and whether you'll continue to do business under your UBI/tax registration number.

Master Applications — request a new Master Application if you're changing your business structure (legal entity), changing or adding a trade name, opening a new location, reopening a closed business, divorcing and your spouse is no longer responsible for the business, changing your principal product or service and a license from another agency is required, or transferring the majority of a corporation's stock to different individuals.

Copies of rules, laws, or other departmental publications — request a rule, law, or other publication. An order form listing the Department's fact sheets and brochures is available via *Fast Fax*, code 501#.

Proposed rules — leave informal comments on proposed rule changes or ask to be placed on a mailing list to receive notice of future proposed rule-making actions.

Delinquent notices/no tax returns — clear the delinquency if you have received a delinquent notice and you have no business to report.

Duplicate tax returns — request a new tax return be faxed or mailed if you've misplaced your tax return. Have your UBI/tax registration number ready when calling.

Tax Express — listen to prerecorded tax information by calling 1-800-334-8969. To listen to the topic of your choice, enter the three-digit code. To receive a list of topics and codes, call 1-800-647-7706 and leave a message with the automated voice attendant.



Revenue's web site — see what's new on our web site: <http://dor.wa.gov>

To inquire about the availability of this document in an alternate format for the visually impaired or language other than English, please call (360) 753-3217. Teletype (TTY) users please call 1-800-451-7985.

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